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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [redacted]

SPOT COMMENTARY

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE [redacted]

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Iraq-Kuwait: Situation Report #476

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Approved for Release
Date [redacted]

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Iraq Widens Reserve Call-up

The Iraqi Defense Ministry today ordered reservists born in the years 1954, 1955, and 1956 to report within three days to their recruitment offices, according to press sources. [redacted]

French Join Desert Storm

French Defense Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement announced today that 12 French Jaguar fighter-bombers attacked Al Jaber airfield in Kuwait this morning, according to press reports. At least four of the aircraft were hit by ground fire--one plane was seriously damaged--forcing two to land at alternate airfields in Saudi Arabia. President Mitterand issued an order earlier in the day placing French forces in Saudi Arabia under US operational control. [redacted]

International Reaction

Soviet Reaction

According to Chief of the General Staff Moiseyev, the Soviet armed forces in the southern USSR have been put on "high military alert." In a taped message, Soviet President Gorbachev stated that hostilities were provoked by Iraq's refusal to withdraw from Kuwait. He reassured the Soviet people that thus far there were no casualties among the Soviets left in Iraq. Gorbachev declared that he had been notified about the attack by President Bush an hour before it occurred and that he proposed that Bush contact Husayn directly in a final attempt to resolve the crisis peacefully. He also claimed to have contacted numerous other world leaders in an attempt to "localize" the conflict. He concluded by saying that he would take all measures possible to end the war quickly. [redacted]

Official Reaction...

Iraq: Saddam Husayn, in a recorded statement carried by Baghdad Radio stated that "the treacherous have committed their treachery...the great duel, the mother of all battles has begun and victory is very near." The Iraqi president was subsequently seen by a CNN reporter at Baghdad's Television station--he was reportedly there to record a statement to the Iraqi people. [redacted]

Israel: Israeli Defense Minister Arens cautioned against premature euphoria over the onset of war, noting that it was "too early to say that the danger has passed." [redacted]

Kuwait: The Crown Prince said in a message to the Kuwaiti people that the "whole world is witnessing the final historic moments from victory of right and justice and the defeat of deception and aggression." [redacted]

Iran: President Rafsanjani stated Iran deplored the outbreak of the Gulf war as a "heavy blow for human life and the region's resources." He added "Iran is closely following all the movements in the region." He also voiced regrets over the failure of efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. [redacted]

Syria: An official Syrian daily said "The responsibility for this catastrophic situation in Iraq and the Gulf region now is borne by Saddam personally and he should pay the price and the price of all other crimes he committed against the...Arabs." [redacted]

PLO: The PLO leadership accused "the US-Israeli-European coalition" of "cowardly aggression" against Iraq and said it should be opposed "on all levels." [redacted]

Libya: Muammar Qadhafi said that allied military action in the Gulf should not go beyond driving Iraq out of Kuwait. He was also quoted as saying air raids against Iraq should stop and that military operations be limited to Kuwaiti territory. [redacted]

China: In an official statement China asked the international community to search for a peaceful solution--"At this critical moment, the Chinese government strongly appeals to the warring sides to exercise maximum restraint and to prevent the war from spilling over and expanding." [redacted]

Japan: Prime Minister Kaifu expressed resolute support for the US-led military assault on Iraq and said Japan would provide additional cash to help pay for the war. [redacted]

New Zealand: Prime Minister Jim Bolger described the attack as inevitable but said he still hoped Iraq would quit Kuwait voluntarily, "Saddam made the decision to ignore the deadline and that decision has made today's action unavoidable and inevitable." [redacted]

Cuba: President Fidel Castro quickly criticized the war as unnecessary and said it could have been avoided by diplomatic means--stating the war is a failure for the United Nations and for the politicians of our time. [redacted]

Australia: Prime Minster Bob Hawke said "this tragic necessity has one cause and one cause only...that is the invasion and the occupation of Kuwait. Saddam's aggression has plunged the world into a terrible and needless crisis." [redacted]

South Korea: The Information Minister stated "we wholeheartedly support the decision of the United States-led multinational force to punish Iraq for its continuing uncivilized acts, with the aim of restoring world peace and order." He went on to urge Iraq to immediately withdraw from Kuwait and respect the wishes of the international community. [redacted]

European Community: EC foreign and defense ministers expressed profound regret over the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf, according to a statement issued after an emergency meeting in Paris this morning. The statement said only an Iraqi retreat from Kuwait would avoid greater destruction. [redacted]

NATO: In an emergency meeting this morning NATO ambassadors reiterated their support for the enforcement of Security Council resolutions and reaffirmed their commitment to defend Turkey from Iraqi attack. [redacted]

...Public Protests and Violence

A group called the "Direct Action Committee Against the War" claimed responsibility for firebomb attacks against US and British targets in northern Italy early Thursday morning, according to press. Other press reports

indicate a wave of anti-war protests swept Australia this morning, while three anti-US demonstrations were getting underway in Pakistan, according to the American Consulate in Peshawar. Some of the demonstrators were reportedly planning to attack the American Center in Peshawar, but Pakistani police claim they have the crowds under control.

[redacted]